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REVIEWS.

Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century. By PHILIP ALEXANDER BRUCE. London and New York, Macmillan & Co., 1896.—Two vols., 634, 647 pp.

One who reads the literature in which are enshrined the facts of early American history often carries away the impression that they are at best petty and commonplace. The stage is small ; the players are few. Startling events, such as are calculated to lend dramatic interest to the story, are exceedingly rare. The narrative works of early American writers are entirely lacking in literary form ; while the largest, and often the most valuable, part of his material the historian must laboriously extract and piece together from the journals of courts, councils and legislatures, from relations, diaries, fragments of correspondence, account books, wills and church records. Much of this matter still exists only in manuscript, and is relatively inaccessible. But when for any section of the country, or period of time, or subdivision of the subject, the evidence is once well marshaled, the result, whether viewed from the standpoint of the growing imperial system or from that of the colonies themselves, will be found not devoid of interest or importance.

It is not often that this fact is brought out so clearly as by the volumes before us. Mr. Bruce has produced a work of 1300 pages on a single phase of the history of a single commonwealth during the earliest century of its existence. It is the history of the way in which wealth was produced in Virginia in the seventeenth century, with introductory chapters on the motives which led to its colonization and on aboriginal Virginia, and supplementary chapters on money and on the town. The London Company and the policy of the home government toward the colony necessarily receive much attention, while many details of administration and facts of a general social nature are introduced. The consideration of finance is properly excluded, though much of a public economic nature is necessarily included. Mr. Bruce has put a liberal interpretation upon his subject and on his relations thereto, and the result is a very thorough and satisfactory exposition of the economic history of early Virginia. Apparently all accessible material, both in print and manuscript, has been utilized, and that to the fullest extent. Everything of importance

in the writings of Smith and his coadjutors, in the records of the London Company, in the pamphlets of Force, in the statutes of Hening, in the manuscript resources of the English Record Office, in county records, land patents, personal and family papers, has been wrought into the fabric of this treatise. Added to this is the familiarity with the subject attained by the author through a lifelong residence in the community of whose origin he writes. When brought into place in these pages, the seemingly petty details of the early records and relations assume an added significance. Minor details there are, but they are on the whole properly subordinated and made to serve a purpose. In the treatment of his subject Mr. Bruce has shown what is possible through a careful and exhaustive study of authorities. The ground here covered will not soon require cultivation by other hands.

In his treatment of the agricultural system, which occupies the larger part of the first volume, the author discusses, among other things, the selection of the place of settlement, the importance to the colonists of the cultivation of maize, the introduction of private property, and the efforts to introduce the cultivation of hemp, flax, the grape and other products which would diversify the industry of the colony. Not the least important chapter in the volume is that in which the acquisition of title to land is discussed. Of special interest in this is the history of the apportionment of grants on the basis of the "head right," or claim to fifty acres for the transportation of a servant or emigrant to the colony. From the dissolution of the company till 1705 this was, save in the Northern Neck, almost the only way in which a right to unoccupied land could be obtained. This fact led to the manipulation and abuse of the law by shipmasters and others and to an extensive traffic in claims. The methods of granting land patents by the company and by its successors in authority are described, as are also the steps taken to locate and establish boundaries. Careful estimates are given of the average size of estates in both the first and the second half of the century.

The most important feature of the agricultural system was of course the tobacco culture. Its origin, the policy of the home government towards it, its steady growth, in spite of efforts to check it, until it absorbed the energies of Virginia and her immediate neighbors, are described at length. It is very clearly shown that this was a natural development, arising from the fact that tobacco was a more remunerative product than any other which could then have been raised in Virginia. The extent to which the tobacco culture gave form to

society in the colony is also abundantly illustrated, while in the chapters on labor its connection with slavery is more specifically treated.

From the view of Mr. Bruce concerning the policy of James I toward tobacco in Virginia, however, it is possible to dissent. He says (vol. i, p. 264) that "the whole object of James was to lay such charges on the importation of that commodity from Virginia as to place it at a serious disadvantage with the Spanish product." That the influence of Gondomar over the king led to a policy which favored the interests of Spain in all lines of intercourse, cannot be denied. But there was in England a legitimate demand for a certain quantity of Spanish tobacco, which arose from its superior quality, and which it was proper to satisfy. The insistence of the king that the total product from Virginia should be brought to England arose from his desire for the customs duty upon it, and was in harmony with the commercial policy of the times. This Mr. Bruce has shown. The granting of the monopoly of importation to Sir Thomas Roe, and later to Mr. Jacob, simply illustrates the development of monopolies which James had inherited from Elizabeth, but which the rule of favorites tended to emphasize. The policy of the king toward the tobacco trade seems, then, to have been dominated by fiscal motives more than by desire to favor Spain.

While tracing further the history of the tobacco question, Mr. Bruce, on page 282, antedates by ten years the formation of the Board of Trade and Plantations. The proclamation issued by Charles I, May 13, 1625, to which he refers, did not create a committee for regulating the affairs of the colonies, but continued in existence a commission specially formed on June 24 of the previous year to settle the affairs of Virginia. Nearly ten years passed before the declared intention of the king to establish a committee of general control was carried into execution. The proclamation of May 13, 1625, is printed in Rymer, *Fædera*, XVIII, 72. The error reappears on page 283, where the commissioners for Virginia affairs are referred to under the date of 1626 as the "new commissioners for plantations."

The laborers of Virginia were the indentured servants and the slaves. The former were in the seventeenth century a more important factor than the latter, though here again economic advantage led to the steady encroachment of the slave system upon that of free white servants. In his account of the economic conditions in England which occasioned the migration of laborers, Mr. Bruce follows

Rogers. What he adds is an explanation of the causes which made the demand for labor in Virginia strong. The result was the steady flow of servants thither. The classes of these servants, the extent to which they were protected by the terms of their indentures, the means used to prevent their escape, the character of their life and work in Virginia, the rise of many of them in the social scale are described. At the beginning the slave was regarded simply as a servant for life (II, 65), and custom threw about him many of the guarantees which were secured to the whites by their indentures.

Finally, Mr. Bruce discusses the methods by which the colonists supplied themselves with manufactured goods, whether by importation or by manufacture at home. For reasons already indicated, by far the most important part of this subject is that which relates to the importation of supplies. In that connection the history of the trade of the colony is traced from the meagre "supplies" of the early years through the period of the "magazine" to that of individual trading after 1619. Besides trade relations with the mother country, those with the Dutch and with other English colonies are described. Abundant details are given to illustrate commercial methods, rates of profit, and the kinds of commodities in which traffic was carried on. The effects of the Acts of Trade are discussed, though without throwing new light on the subject. The relative justification of the policy is acknowledged, as is its success—so far, at least, as Virginia was concerned. The interesting fact is noted that Virginia, at least in the seventeenth century, failed to respond to one of the demands of English colonial policy, in that she produced almost no raw materials. Tobacco was not regarded as such, and efforts to encourage the production of naval stores did not become very prominent till the next century. But if tobacco made the production of raw materials impossible, it was equally an obstacle to the development of manufacturing in the colony, and insured to England, under the restrictions of the Acts of Trade, the monopoly of the colonial market.

The larger part of Mr. Bruce's references to the British State Papers are made to the Sainsbury *Abstracts* which exist in the Virginia State Library. That may account for an occasional inconsistency between his statements and those which appear in the *Calendars*. For example, the man whom he calls "Amis" on page 284 and elsewhere in the first volume, appears as "Anis" in the *Calendars*. Occasionally a date which appears as conjectural in the *Calendars* becomes definite in the text. According to the *Calendar*, the petition of Governor Yeardley to the Privy Council in April, 1627, bears the date of the

day succeeding, rather than preceding, the meeting of the planters and adventurers at Sir John Wolstenholme's. For the use of the word Canada (I, 239 and elsewhere) where Acadia is meant, very slight justification could be produced. The authority on which the statement is based I have not at hand, but I query whether the words "expressly disallowed by the commissioners of the customs" (II, 464) could in any case correctly describe the action of that board upon a colonial law. That power belonged to the king in council, while the commissioners of the customs were subordinated to the treasury board, and had no control over legislation except through report and advice.

HERBERT L. OSGOOD.

The Building of a Nation: The Growth, Present Condition and Resources of the United States, with a Forecast of the Future. By HENRY GANNETT, Chief Geographer of the Geological Survey and of the Tenth and Eleventh Censuses. New York, The Henry T. Thomas Company, 1895.—252 pp.

This book consists principally of a recapitulation of the chief results of the last census of the United States, profusely illustrated with maps, charts and diagrams. In the first fifty pages the author deals with the geography of the country, the organization of the federal, state and territorial governments, public debts, the budget, the army and the navy, pensions and public lands. Then comes a lengthy treatment of population, followed by shorter sections on agriculture, manufactures, mineral resources, transportation, and finance and wealth. The whole is put together in such a way as to give the impression of a book made to sell rather than of a serious effort to portray scientifically the progress of the country. A man of Mr. Gannett's official position should have given his readers the benefit of his training and experience so as to save them from the danger of confusion of facts, illogical inferences and unfounded assumptions. The book suffers from comparison with similar work done by the official statisticians of other countries, such as Rauchberg's *Bevölkerung Oesterreichs*, de Foville's *La France Économique*, Bodio's *Di alcuni Indici Misuratori del Movimento Economico in Italia*, and (in a more restricted field) Giffen's *Growth of Capital*. He might have learned something also from the recent work of his own chief, Carroll D. Wright, in the *Industrial Evolution of the United States*.

This may seem to be a harsh judgment of a book that is intended